



SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Education
Office of the Dean
1801 East Cotati Avenue, Rohnert Park CA 94928

November 21, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

We in the School of Education at Sonoma State University are committed to educating teachers who design and carry out inclusive educational practices that respect human differences and educate all learners. We believe that teachers and school leaders are agents of social change and advocates of the broader intellectual and social values of a democratic society. We believe this applies to all learners regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, economic background or sexual orientation. Grounded in these values, the School of Education faculty unanimously support and endorse the work of our colleague Don Romesburg in his effort to change California Education Code through SB 48 so LGBT history might be included in public elementary and secondary education curriculum.

LGBT people should be included in all grade levels from primary, intermediate and middle through high school grades. The Education Code amended through the passage of SB 48 covers history and social science instruction throughout the K-12 grade levels and does not limit the inclusion of LGBT Americans only to secondary school grade levels. Currently the proposed revisions include only one reference prior to Grade 11 to any LGBT person or historical event. Well-distributed inclusion across multiple grades will build the necessary foundation to help students become active, engaged, and informed citizens for today's world. It will correct the current systematic exclusion of LGBT history from early and modern U.S. and California history and bring the Framework into line with four decades of scholarly historical publishing on the roles and contributions of LGBT people and events in U.S. history. It will help students who are LGBT or come from LGBT families to develop positive self-esteem. It will also help to decrease harassment by helping all students, across the grade spectrum, develop greater understanding of diversity in our society, communities, and classrooms.

A transformative approach to teaching LGBT-inclusive history (as described in the Making the Framework FAIR report) is both a pedagogical best practice for teaching about diversity and the strongest way to bring the FAIR Education Act mandates into line with Common Core approaches and History-Social Science teaching. A transformative approach will ensure that the History-Social Science Framework does not tokenize LGBT people, and there is no need to take the slow, incremental route from adding token heroes to bringing in more substantial analytical frames that has been the process for women and people of color. Through showing change over time within the long sweep of U.S. history, a transformative Framework will empower students with flexible analytical skills for understanding and contextualizing how gender and sexuality shape contemporary politics and policy, culture, and society.

We are committed to partner with Professor Romesburg and promote inclusive practices and inclusive curriculum development as we engage in the important work of preparing teachers and school leaders for California's public schools.

On behalf of the Faculty of the School of Education at Sonoma State University,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carlos Ayala". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "C" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Carlos Ayala, Dean
School of Education

